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RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 4020

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CHENGDU 000155

SENSITIVE  
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DEPT FOR EAP/CM

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: ECON SOCI CH

SUBJECT: NEW TELEMEDICINE CENTER AIMS TO EXPAND QUAKE ZONE HEALTHCARE  
ACCESS

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**¶11.** (U) This cable contains sensitive but unclassified  
information - not for distribution on the Internet.

**¶12.** (SBU) Introduction and Summary: In the aftermath of the massive, May 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, ConGen Chengdu has closely monitored disaster reconstruction and response efforts, including attempts by U.S. firms to build goodwill through in-kind donations and technical assistance. In this context, Pol/Econoff recently learned about Sichuan Province's first video teleconferencing telemedicine system, which links to both other hospitals and remote mobile units, and has been installed by U.S.-based Cisco Systems at the Sichuan First Provincial Hospital. Rapidly deployable mobile units will enable medical personnel in the field to quickly and efficiently share information. Cisco will donate USD 44 million worth of equipment and services over a three-year period for cooperative healthcare and education projects with the Sichuan Provincial Health Bureau. Cisco plans to establish telecommunications links to several additional hospitals, expand the current pilot project to the First Provincial Hospital's earthquake rehabilitation center, and incorporate additional mobile health vehicles. Effective training and long-term funding will be critical to the system's success. End Introduction and Summary.

A Post-Quake Public-Private Partnership

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**¶13.** (U) In July 2008, Cisco Systems and the Sichuan Provincial Government signed a memorandum of understanding initiating the "Connecting Sichuan" program, described on Cisco's website as "a three-year public-private partnership to aid the rebuilding effort, with a focus on improving healthcare and education in earthquake-damaged areas." Under the healthcare and education initiatives, Cisco is piloting new systems that it hopes will be replicable on a wider scale. Cisco's report on the first year of the partnership is available online at: <http://tinyurl.com/sichuan-cisco>.

Telemedicine Technology Launched at Sichuan First Provincial Hospital

14. (SBU) The pilot "Health Presence" site (HPS), located at the First Provincial Hospital in Chengdu, includes a videoconferencing system that links hospitals with each other as well as to truck-based treatment rooms. Sichuan Provincial Hospital HPS site is now linked to the Prince of Wales Hospital in Hong Kong. The HPS system supports twenty simultaneous telephone conversations and video conferences simultaneously on three monitors, either through the Internet or satellite links.

15. (SBU) By October 2009, Cisco plans to add Sichuan's Ninth Provincial Hospital to the network of medical centers linked to the Sichuan Provincial Hospital. A Cisco employee said that the Ninth Provincial Hospital would have cameras located in patient treatment rooms so that specialists in the HPS will be able to observe and advise during medical procedures. Sichuan's Third and Tenth Provincial Hospitals will also join the network before the project is completed in July 2011. Mobile health vehicles described below will be deployable to rural quake-hit areas and other areas of medical need.

Mobile Telecom-Equipped Units Convey Expert Advice to Rural Health Providers

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16. (SBU) CNA, a Singaporean company, is working with Cisco to build the mobile health vehicles at a cost of slightly less than 3 million RMB (440,000 USD) per vehicle. The vehicles are built in Nanjing on an Isuzu truck platform that weighs roughly 7 tons depending on the final configuration. Cisco and hospital staff gave Congenoffs an informal tour of the first vehicle, which is already in operation and has been deployed several times for non-emergency use in the quake zone. The vehicle has a patient treatment room and small conference area. Cameras in the meeting and treatment areas can link back to the HPS either by a wired Internet connection or a satellite dish with microwave transceiver mounted on the roof. An employee of CNA told Congenoffs that the satellite communication will be routed through a Thai satellite.

17. (SBU) The vehicles also have an externally-mounted camera that can be used to provide real-time video of disaster areas to workers at the HPS. Cisco and CNA plan to build several additional vehicles by mid-2011, each with a dedicated function. A second vehicle like the one described above is now in Beijing for demonstration purposes. Additional vehicles planned include two "emergency command center" models—that will have an emergency communications center instead of a patient treatment room—and one "health checkup" vehicle. This one will be based at a hospital currently under construction in Wenchuan, near the quake's epicenter. At least one of the additional vehicles will carry X-ray and ultrasound equipment.

Project Could Face Long-term Sustainability Challenges

¶8. (SBU) Cisco has committed to providing three-years of pro bono post-installation maintenance service for all equipment donated under the "Connecting Sichuan" program, after which the hospitals involved will bear all related costs. One Cisco contact noted that from a budgetary stand point, this will be "no problem" for the hospitals as they are well funded. However, he noted that Cisco has encountered significant resistance to accepting their donated equipment among some hospital officials. Many hospital officials are accustomed to receiving large kickbacks from medical equipment contracts, he said, and donated equipment cuts into this income source. In the long-term, how this will translate into support for maintaining the system remains to be seen.

¶9. (SBU) Comment: During equipment demonstrations, which included separately conferencing Hong Kong and the mobile health vehicle connected via a wired LAN, representatives seemed unfamiliar with the equipment. Connecting to Hong Kong took several minutes. The connection to the vehicle worked well, but the operator did not know how to switch to a camera located in the patient room. As the number of linked facilities and vehicles increases, the effectiveness of the training employees get to use the technology will probably determine the overall success of the project.

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